

REMARKS

Claims 1, 9, 12, 16 and 17 have been amended. Claims 4, 7, 8 and 18-24 have been canceled. Thus, claims 1, 3 and 9-17 are now pending in the present application. Support for the amendment to claim 1 may be found in original claim 8. Thus, no new matter has been added and entry of these amendments is respectfully requested. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the present rejections in view of the amendments and comments presented herein are respectfully requested.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph

Claims 4 and 18-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as allegedly being indefinite. Claims 4 and 18-21 have been canceled, thus rendering the rejection moot.

In view of the comments presented above, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

Prior art rejections

Claims 4 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kawasato et al. (US 2003/0049456). Claims 4 and 7 have been canceled, thus rendering this rejection moot.

Claims 1, 3, 11 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Kawasato et al. (US 2003/0049456), and Claim 10 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)) as being unpatentable over Kawasato et al. (US 2003/0049456) in view of Satoh (WO02/077116, corresponding to US 2004/0186216). Claim 19 has been canceled, rendering the rejection of this claim moot.

At page 6 of the Office Action, the Examiner stated that claims 8, 9, 12-17 and 22 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 1 as amended recites the subject matter of canceled claim 8. Thus, claim 1 as amended represents claim 8 rewritten in independent form. Thus, claim 1 should now be allowable. Since claims 3, 10 and 11 depend either directly or indirectly on claim 1, they should also be allowable.

In addition, as suggested by the Examiner, Claims 12, 16 and 17 have been rewritten into independent form. Thus, these claims should also be allowable. The remaining claims are all

ultimately dependent on an allowable claim. Accordingly, all claims are now believed to be fully in condition for allowance.

In view of comments presented above, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§102(b) and 103(a).

CONCLUSION

Applicants submit that all claims are in condition for allowance. However, if minor matters remain, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,

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